

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CRATER HEALTH DISTRICT PROMOTES PREVENTION FOR WORLD AIDS DAY**

*Working Together for an AIDS-Free Generation*

(PETERSBURG, Va.) – On December 1, 2012 we commemorate World AIDS DAY. In honor of this day and throughout the year, Public Health strives to reduce new infections, increase access to care and improve health outcomes for people living with HIV/AIDS, and reduce HIV related health disparities.

Crater Health District promotes risk reduction by educating and empowering citizens to make healthy lifestyle choices. The district offers weekly HIV testing at each of their 7 local health departments. Crater also partners with the Minority Health Consortium (MHC) to offer weekly sexual health education sessions. “These sessions called VOICES includes; viewing a safe sex negotiation video, discussion about using condoms, condom demonstration, and the distribution of free condoms,” explains Juan Pierce, MHC Executive Director.

Tia Sanchez, Crater Health District Health Counselor emphasizes, “Knowing your status is the key, if you are sexually active, you are at risk! You have to protect yourself. Everyone who is sexually active should incorporate annual HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing as a routine part of their healthcare. All 7 local health departments within the district offer a variety of free condoms.”

Increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for people living with HIV/AIDS is necessary. Through the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, Crater Health District is able to provide medication assistance for HIV/AIDS clients who are low-income or uninsured.

“While some communities have experienced a decline in new HIV cases, some populations are still disproportionately affected. Those high risk populations include; African-Americans, gay and bisexual men, and intravenous (IV) drug users. Therefore, it is important to for us to promote HIV awareness, prevention, and testing to all of our communities in addition to targeting those high risk populations,” states Alton Hart, Jr., MD, MPH, Health Director of the Crater Health District.

To find out where you can get tested call your local health department or visit [www.hivtest.org](http://www.hivtest.org) . For more information about HIV/AIDS or STI Prevention, visit the Virginia Department of Health’s Disease Prevention website at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/DiseasePrevention/index.htm>.

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**Crater Health District**  
*Helping Build Healthy Communities*  
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